



Tennessee Regulatory Authority

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TRA Adopts Performance Standards for BellSouth

Nashville, Tennessee – The Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) today adopted standards aimed at advancing the development of competition in the state's \$3 billion telecommunications market.

By unanimous vote, the TRA adopted a set of performance standards, benchmarks and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that BellSouth provides fair and nondiscriminatory access to its technologically elaborate telecommunications network.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996, a landmark revision of the nation's telecommunications laws, asserts that incumbent local exchange telecommunications providers such as BellSouth, must provide access on a wholesale basis to all unbundled network element (UNE) processes, including pre-ordering, ordering, provisioning, maintenance and repair and billing to competitive telecommunications companies.

"This non-discriminatory access to BellSouth's processing network will provide greater assurance to competitive companies that they will receive quality service in a timely manner, thus allowing competition to evolve more rapidly in Tennessee," says Joe Werner, chief of the TRA's Telecommunications Division.

Along with today's adoption of performance standards were benchmarks to track the progress of the performance measurements, and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that BellSouth is meeting the established benchmarks to provide nondiscriminatory access.

Today's decision is critical to BellSouth's application to provide interLATA long distance service. Section 271 of the 1996 Telecommunications Act sets forth a 14-point checklist that BellSouth must meet prior to receiving interLATA authority.

"We've adopted a very comprehensive set of performance measures today which will allow us to gather the necessary information to determine whether BellSouth has opened up its network in a competitively neutral manner," added Mr. Werner.

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